



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(HELENA) --- UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 4.6%

(HELENA) --- Montana's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased slightly by 0.2% in September to 4.6%. Montana continues to be well below the national average of 6.1%.

"Montana's unemployment rate and economy continue to out-perform the national trend, however we are not completely immune to the national economic storm surrounding us," said Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "This is well within normal unemployment levels; fortunately Montana has a diverse economy. We've seen layoffs in the timber industry, but growth in the agriculture and energy sectors are helping Montana weather this storm."

Montana is also out-performing neighboring Idaho, another state affected by layoffs in the timber industry. Idaho saw their seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increase to 5.0%, up from 4.6% last month and up 2.2% over the year.

The total number of Montanans who are working, including agricultural and self-employed workers, increased by 866 jobs on a seasonally adjusted basis.

The seasonally adjusted consumer price index (CPI-U) remained unchanged for the month of September. Energy prices fell 1.9% in September, with food prices increasing 0.6%. The price levels for all items less food and energy, also called core inflation, increased to 0.1%.

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**Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

The October 2008 Labor Situation Report will be released on Friday, November 21, 2008.

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

Monthly labor force information for Montana counties are available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=205>

Monthly Montana industry employment information is available at:

<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=199>

Annual labor force data for Indian Reservations in Montana are available at:

www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121